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lia, New Guinea and some of the neighboring islands. The mounds built by these birds are entirely composed of vegetable matters collected industriously from the surface of the ground. That of *T. lathamii* measures as much as six to seven feet in height and twelve to fourteen in diameter, but this pile is not the work of a single pair, and sometimes seems to contain the eggs of two females in the same season. The heat in the central portions of these mounds reaches 37° to 39° Centigrade. This Talegalla inhabits the whole of the eastern part of Australia, its eggs are highly prized both by aborigines and colonists, and the bird itself is easily tamed and of excellent flavor.

The remaining species of the genus inhabit New Guinea and the surrounding isles.

The most widely spread and largest genus of the family is that from which its name is derived. Nineteen species of Megapodius, distributed over a large part of Oceanica and in some of the Indian isles, are distinguished by our author. Most of these have somber, uniform plumage, and all live in brush or forest, generally near the sea, feed upon fruits, seeds, insects and worms, deposit their eggs in mounds of sand, earth and vegetable matter, and do not care for their young, which are robust and completely feathered when hatched. All run swiftly, but fly heavily. *M. dillwynii* inhabits the Philippine islands; *M. nicobariensis*, the islands from which it is named (it is the *Omaah*, *Meka* and *Dalc* of the natives); *M. la perousii*, the Marianne islands; *M. senex*, the Pelew islands; *M. stairi*, Ninasou or Good Hope island near the Tonga archipelago; and *M. layardi*, the New Hebrides. Thus the geographical distribution of the group is much wider than has been hitherto believed.

The mounds of *M. duperreyi*, the best known species, a native of New Guinea and Queensland, sometimes reach a height of fourteen feet and a circumference of a hundred and forty feet, but such mounds are the work of generations of birds, and are only found in places where they have worked undisturbed by egg-hunting aborigines or colonists. A height of five or six feet is usual.

DONNELLY'S ATLANTIS.¹—The author's purpose in preparing this book, is to demonstrate some thirteen propositions, several of which he claims to be novel; and here we think the author is correct. Some of them are as follows:

1. That there once existed in the Atlantic ocean, opposite the mouth of the Mediterranean sea, a large island, which was the remnant of an Atlantic continent, and known to the ancient world as Atlantis.

2. That the description of this island, given by Plato, is not, as has been long supposed, fable, but veritable history.

¹ *Atlantis: the Antediluvian World*. By IGNATIUS DONNELLY. Illustrated. New York, Harper & Brothers. 1882. 12mo, pp. 490.

3. That Atlantis was the region where man first rose from a state of barbarism to civilization.

4. That it became, in the course of ages, a populous and mighty nation, from whose overflowings the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, the Mississippi river, the Amazon, the Pacific coast of South America, the Mediterranean, the west coast of Europe and Africa, the Baltic, the Black sea and the Caspian, were populated by civilized nations.

Our author having, as he appears to believe, established these points, is fully convinced that not only was this Atlantis the true antediluvian world, the Garden of Eden, the Elysian fields, &c., &c., but that the gods and goddesses of the ancient Greeks, the Phœnicians, the Hindoos and the Scandinavians were simply the kings, queens and heroes of Atlantis, and the acts attributed to them in mythology are a confused recollection of real historical events. His thirteenth and last proposition is that when Atlantis sunk under the waves "a few persons escaped in ships and in rafts, and carried to the nations east and west the tidings of the appalling catastrophe, which has survived to our own time in the flood and deluge legends of the different nations of the old and new worlds."

The book is the result of extensive but desultory reading, neither critical nor well directed. We may admire the author's courage, while we may not have so high an opinion of his judgment in dealing with subjects in regard to some of which the ablest investigators might well hesitate to express an opinion. So-called demonstrations based on improbable hypotheses, in this book go hand in hand with a leveling democratic use or misuse of authors, which is characteristic of works of the character of the "Atlantis." He does not seem to recognize the fact that one writer may carry more weight than another.

The author starts with the view that the results of the *Challenger's* researches were to establish the existence of a submarine Atlantean continent; whereas if any one geological fact seems to have been elicited by the soundings made in the North Atlantic, and one about which the soundest geologists are agreed, is the view that the ocean beds have always been such. If this be so, the foundations of a hypothetical Atlantis have been removed; and so one might go through the book and show, in the light of modern anthropology and philology, that the positions soberly advocated by our well-meaning author, are simply absurdities. The book is well written, with excellent illustrations, and type and press work are most creditable to the publishers, but the time for such books has gone by, since the results of recent geological and anthropological as well as philological studies combine to show that man originated somewhere in Central Asia, and migrated westward. If the reader thinks that our criticisms are unjust, let him, after reading the "Atlantis," examine Tylor's

Anthropology and Dawkin's Early Man in Britain, and the late Mr. L. H. Morgan's writings on the North American Indians.

UNDERWOOD'S FERNS.¹—Last year the first edition of this book was noticed in the NATURALIST. It is with great pleasure that we welcome the new and much enlarged edition which has just come to hand. It has been carefully revised and much new matter has been added. As now published it includes the whole of the Pteridophyta, that is, the so-called vascular cryptogams. Many new paragraphs and a chapter or two are added to the text, and considerable changes and additions have been made in the systematic portion. On pp. 34 and 35 the asexual and sexual generations are respectively called the *Pteridoid* and the *Thalloid* phases, two most excellent expressions, which ought to be introduced into usage in the books. On p. 53, in giving the names of the seven divisions or sub-kingdoms of the vegetable kingdom, the author, for the sake of uniformity, writes *Zygospora*, *Oospora*, *Carpospora*, instead of *Zygosporeæ*, *Oosporeæ*, *Carposporeæ*, which is an attempt in the right direction. The literature of the Pteridophyta is greatly extended, and appears to be pretty full. It is certainly a very valuable part of the book, as it includes, in the case of American works, not only the books, but many papers in periodicals, reports, etc.

The arrangement of the orders of Pteridophytes followed, is as follows:

Class I.—EQUISETINÆ. Orders Calamariaceæ and Equisetaceæ.

“ II.—FILICINÆ. Orders Ophioglossaceæ, Marattiaceæ and Filices.

“ III.—RHIZOCARPEÆ. Orders Marsiliaceæ and Salviniaceæ.

“ IV.—LYCOPODINÆ. Orders Lycopodiaceæ, Lepidodendraceæ, Sigillariaceæ, Selaginellaceæ and Isoetaceæ.

The important announcement is made, at the end of the volume, that the author has under preparation a Synopsis of the Hepaticæ on a plan similar to the work under review. We hope that its appearance will not be long delayed, and trust that it will prove to be as valuable a hand-book as has “Our Native Ferns.” —C. E. B.

STUDIES FROM THE BIOLOGICAL LABORATORY OF JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY.—The second number of the second volume of this valuable series is fully equal in interest to those which have preceded it. While it contains some medico-biological and physiological papers, the purely zoölogical ones are the following: List of Medusæ found at Beaufort, N. C., during the summers of 1880 and 1881, and a paper on the development of the ova in *Salpa*, by W. K. Brooks; On the origin of the so-called “test cells” in the ascidian ovum, by J. McMarrich; Some notes on the development of *Arbacia punctulata*, by H. Garman and B. P.

¹*Our Native Ferns and their Allies, with synoptical descriptions of the American Pteridophyta north of Mexico.* A second and enlarged edition of *Our Native Ferns and How to Study Them.* By LUCIEN M. UNDERWOOD, Ph.D., professor of geology and botany in the Illinois Wesleyan University. Bloomington, Ill., 1882.